

**ABSTRACT**

Determining whether a first wireless terminal may transmit on an uplink to a servicing base station in a cellular wireless communication system includes first receiving a plurality of a Radio Frequency (RF) bursts at a wireless terminal from a servicing base station. These RF bursts carry a data block containing both Uplink Status Flag (USF) bits and Data bits. Data bits may or may not be intended for the receiving wireless terminal. The RF bursts are processed to produce the data block in an encoded format. This data block is then partially decoded to extract the USF bits when the data bits are not intended for the receiving wireless terminal. These USF bits determine when the receiving wireless terminal can transmit or uplink to the servicing base station. The partial decoding may be halted once the USF bits have been extracted from the received data block to reduce power consumption and processing requirements.